CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FOURTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 14 May 1996, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Abuah (Nigeria)

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The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 734th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament, the first of the second part of our annual session.

The inter-sessional period has given us the opportunity to consult in our capitals. We should now proceed with renewed vigour and determination to achieve the unanimous desire of the international community to complete the comprehensive test-ban treaty. The world is anxiously watching us to see if the Conference can achieve yet another historic feat. We should not fail.

It gives me pleasure to extend, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, a warm welcome to the Minister of External Relations of Brazil, His Excellency Mr. Luiz Felipe Lampreia, who will be our first speaker today. It is especially gratifying for us to see him here again in this forum, where he represented his Government from September 1993 to February 1995. Many of us will remember the dedication with which he attempted to move forward the issue of expansion of membership of the Conference in his capacity as Friend of the Chair on this issue. That the Minister has found the time, despite his heavy schedule, to address the Conference will surely be appreciated by all of us, and we look forward to his statement with great interest.

Allow me also to welcome the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, His Excellency Mr. David Davis, who will address the Conference today. His presence among us today is yet another expression of his Government's abiding commitment to the proceedings of this forum and the importance it attaches to the conclusion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty.

I should also like to take this opportunity to welcome among us Ambassador Fisseha Yimer, the new Permament Representative of Ethiopia, and assure him of our full cooperation.

In addition to the Minister of External Relations of Brazil and the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom, I also have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Egypt, Croatia, the Russian Federation and Sri Lanka. Once we have listened to all the speakers inscribed for today, I intend to take up for decision the request received from Angola to participate in our work as a non-member. It now gives me great pleasure to give the floor to the Minister of External Relations of Brazil, His Excellency, Mr. Lampreia.

Mr. LAMPREIA (Brazil): It is an honour and a pleasure for me to address the Conference on Disarmament as Minister of External Relations of Brazil. As a former Permanent Representative of my country in Geneva, I take personal satisfaction in the opportunity of returning to meet old friends whose wisdom is always a source of inspiration. My prior experience in this hall has given me first-hand contact with, and knowledge of, the challenges and responsibilities before the Conference on Disarmament, as well as the privilege of participating in its efforts to bring about a world free of all threat from weapons of mass destruction.

At this critical juncture, Mr. President, it augurs well for the Conference to be presided over by a seasoned and skilled diplomat such as

yourself. I wish to commend your deft handling of Conference business, as well as to reiterate the assurance of Brazil's full cooperation in the discharge of your difficult task.

I find it particularly gratifying to speak before the Conference at a time when Brazil holds the coordinatorship of the Group of 21, a caucus long known for its unwavering commitment to world peace, some of whose current members have been calling for a comprehensive test-ban treaty for over 40 years. The fact that the Group of 21 has never hesitated to embrace ideals and to put forward proposals which may often seem ahead of their time should give this body food for thought as it struggles to find new ways of dealing with old demands, such as the global concern and priority issue that is nuclear disarmament.

President Fernando Henrique Cardoso is deeply and personally engaged in the cause of peace, disarmament and cooperation in international relations. After all, the achievement of the main goals of his administration will be greatly facilitated by an international environment as free as possible of armed conflict and tension.

As a country committed to disarmament and non-proliferation, Brazil believes the international community should become further involved in significant initiatives leading to disarmament, especially in the nuclear field. These initiatives should aim at saving resources from the production of weapons, mainly weapons of mass destruction, and making them available for social and economic advancement in developing countries such as my own.

The creation of a peaceful and stable environment that is conducive to development is therefore a priority for us. We trust that the recent conclusion of the Pelindaba and Bangkok treaties opens an unprecedented opportunity for a nuclear-free southern hemisphere, to be achieved through a building-block approach. Brazil holds that this is possible and that it reflects the interests of all who live south of the Equator.

With the exception of World War II, when Brazil fought for the good cause with the Allies, we have not been involved in any armed conflict in over a century. My country maintains exemplary relations of friendship and cooperation with all of its 10 neighbours. OUr borders have served to unite, rather than to divide. Brazilian military expenditure is among the lowest in the world in terms of GNP.

Brazil has consistently been involved in international disarmament and non-proliferation initiatives. Our participation in the Conference on Disarmament and in the bodies that preceded it bears witness to an unflinching commitment to a world progressively deprived of the means to annihilate human civilization and inflict suffering and pain on peoples who seek to live and develop in an environment of peace and tolerance.

As a participant in the Biological Weapons Convention since its inception, and having recently deposited the instrument of ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention, Brazil is now a full party to the two existing treaties that ban whole categories of weapons of mass destruction. We are

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engaged in the effort currently under way to enhance the effectiveness of the Biological Weapons Convention. We also actively participated in the recently concluded review process of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, to which Brazil acceded last year.

As regards chemical weapons, swift ratification of the CWC by the two main possessors of that class of weapon seems to us imperative in order to avert the prospect of such a treaty entering into force without those two States, which would send an incongruous and disturbing signal to the international community.

Brazil holds unequivocal and unquestioned credentials in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. The principle that nuclear energy should only be used for peaceful purposes was enshrined in the 1988 Brazilian Constitution. Since March 1994, all nuclear materials in all nuclear installations in my country are subject to full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards by means of the application of the Quadripartite Agreement involving Brazil, Argentina, the Argentine-Brazilian Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials and IAEA. In May 1994, the Treaty of Tlatelolco came into force for Brazil, formalizing at the international multilateral treaty level our renunciation of nuclear weapons. The application of Tlatelolco provisions to the whole of Latin America and the Caribbean for the first time brought to a populated region of our planet the benefits of being a nuclear-weapon-free zone, including legally binding negative security assurances on the part of the nuclear-weapon States.

Credentials such as these enable my country to take a firm stance in favour of significant and concrete steps in the field of disarmament. These should be facilitated by the easing of tensions that followed the end of the cold war, and which prompted a number of welcome developments. I have already highlighted the importance of steps taken at the multilateral level in the early 1990s to ban weapons of mass destruction. To these, one would be remiss not to add the most recent unilateral and bilateral actions in the nuclear sphere, such as: the announcement by three nuclear-weapon States of the decision to halt fissile material production; ratification of the START II Treaty by the United States Congress; the decision by the French Government to close all land-based nuclear operations as well as French Pacific test sites; signature by nuclear-weapon States of the Rarotonga and Pelindaba treaties' additional protocols.

All these result not just from revised military doctrines regarding the role to be played by weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, in a world fortunately no longer ruled by the deranged logic of the cold war. They also represent responses to new political and economic realities. Internal public opinion simply does not tolerate bottomless military budgets anymore; it also shows growing difficulty in accepting the continuing need for, let alone the morality of, weapons of such destructive force and indiscriminate effects. Clearly much more needs to be done if the States holding stockpiles and arsenals of weapons of mass destruction are truly to heed the call of significant constituencies within their own countries, as well as of the international community as a whole.

Mr. Lampreia, Brazil

The end of nuclear bipolarity had the immediate result of making disarmament seem outdated, both because the former opponents evolved a new pattern of cooperation and because the new security concerns - regional conflicts and the so-called humanitarian crises - are not amenable to solutions in terms of multilateral arms control agreements. This [illegible] perception, however, is being overthrown by a widespread sentiment of abhorrence of nuclear weapons, as the intense campaign worldwide against nuclear testing has shown just recently. The fact is that the welcome changes in the international scene did not abolish their huge stockpiles. These arsenals pose today's States very different kinds of threats: the risk of nuclear accident; the possibility of nuclear theft enabling the outlandish nuclear terrorism; and the very real threat of de facto legitimating nuclear proliferation. Only working towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons could confront these dangers.

Brazil therefore sides with those who believe that further measures are urgently needed and that the Conference on Disarmament should be allowed to take up its rightful place as the primary forum for nuclear disarmament negotiations. We of course commend and encourage the START I and II processes, whose full implementation will go a long way in rolling back the two greatest nuclear stockpiles on Earth. But START II is still to be ratified by the Russian Federation, which we hope will soon occur. Moreover, the nuclear arsenals of the other nuclear-weapon States so far remain beyond the pale of any phased or time-bound international obligation. If we are to give credence to the recently reaffirmed commitment to pursue in good faith negotiations on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament, this should be followed by a genuine engagement on the part of all nuclear-weapon States in a nuclear disarmament process within the context of the CD, as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body.

Allowing for CD expansion through the immediate implementation of the terms of the decision taken last September and contained in document CD/1356, whereby 23 States will all assume together membership of the Conference, would, for its part, inject new life into and enhance the representativeness of the CD, thus facilitating its future negotiating tasks, one of the very first of which could be a fissile material cut-off convention.

If it is true that our attention has recently been focused on the early conclusion of a CTBT, this should not prevent us, however, from launching discussions on a cut-off convention. This would be the next logical stage in our work, one that we should delay no longer. Together with the CTBT, the cut-off convention will be a significant step in capping the nuclear arms race. It is thus regrettable that the Ad Hoc Committee on this issue, whose mandate was agreed upon by this Conference at the beginning of last year, has not met.

Let me turn to the main issue with which the CD has been grappling for nearly three years now and whose negotiation I dare to trust is entering its final, decision-making stage. I need not emphasize that to my country, as well as to most - if not all - of those represeted around this table and in this hall, having a comprehensive test-ban treaty ready for signature by the outset of the fifty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly is

(Mr. Lampreia, Brazil)

more than an aspiration - it is a matter of giving concrete expression to the international community's conviction that nuclear tests and all they represent no longer have a place in today's world.

Indeed, the prohibition to be imposed on nuclear testing is not and should not be made to become an end in itself. It is but a first step, but a very significant one. As a treaty which will ban an activity inextricably associated with and necessary for carrying on with the infernal spiral of developing, manufacturing, improving and stockpiling nuclear weapons, the CTBT not only can but should serve as a catalyst for nuclear disarmament. Setting the CTBT in its proper context would therefore require provisions emphasizing the vertical proliferation constraint it imposes; highlighting its role in the reversal of the nuclear arms race and in the process of nuclear disarmament; and stressing the need for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons at the earliest possible time and according to a phased programme under a multilaterally agreed process of nuclear disarmament. Given divergence of views regarding these issues, I submit these proposals with an open mind as to their possible further improvement, given the pressing need at this stage for bridging gaps and for finding formulations which attract general support. The price to pay for a universal treaty that would be decisive for nuclear disarmament and for all dimensions of non-proliferation is, in our view, well worth the cost.

Throughout the CTBT negotiations, Brazil has been committed to a treaty that is both meaningful in purpose and endowed with effective means of verification. In the coming weeks, the Brazilian delegation, acting on my direct instructions, will redouble its efforts in striving to accommodate all reasonable concerns and to keep the negotiations within the time-frame set by the United Nations General Assembly. We are sure that CTBT signature in the next few months is a viable proposition. But for that we need to see movement not just on the part of those who still show reluctance to accept the most widely supported formulation for the article on the treaty's scope, for instance, or on the part of those who still admit exceptions to the ban. We also need to see that others realize the limits to the general acceptance of some of their controversial proposals, such as stripping the international data centre of analytical capacity; creating special arrangements for the payment of annual assessments; and allowing for data not gathered through treaty organs to play an institutional role in treaty verification.

I am well aware that during the first part of the 1996 session the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban received important contributions from Iran and Australia and from its own Chairman, Ambassador Jaap Ramaker, toward the early conclusion of negotiations. The Conference also heard many exhortations, not least from the Brazilian delegation itself, to the same effect. Let me be the first to reiterate this plea in this second part of the 1996 session. The stakes are too high for the interntional community to let this opportunity pass for concluding the CTBT.

Before closing, let me address the issue of the future role of this body in the edifice of international relations. Some years ago, when the Chemical Weapons Convention was nearly finished, it was fashionable to ask if there would be "life after the CWC". The same doubts seem to have arisen again

(Mr. Lampreia, Brazil)

concerning the post-CTBT phase. Brazil does not entertain such scepticism. We are confident that the Conference on Disarmament will continue to fulfil an important task in ensuring progress toward a more peaceful and stable world. Alongside the capacity to respond rapidly to threats to international peace and security attributed to the Security Council of the United Nations, it is essential to have a forum where issues related to disarmament, and thus to peace, receive a more universal, systematic and prospective treatment. Moreover, there is no lack of areas of disarmament that would warrant negotiating multilateral agreements by the international community. The problem is, as it always has been, to identify what is considered negotiable by the various members of that community. A spirit of dialogue and flexibility from all quarters will certainly help in devising the agenda for the years to come, as we continue to strive for a world free from weapons of mass destruction.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Minister of External Relations of Brazil for his important statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt, Ambassador Zahran.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt) (translated from Arabic): Let me first of all express my happiness at seeing His Excellency the Minister of External Relations of Brazil, Mr. Luiz Felipe Lampreia, with us at the beginning of this second part of the session this year. I would like to congratulate him on the important statement that he delivered today before the plenary meeting. That statement reflected the extent of the concordance between the positions of Brazil and Egypt concerning questions of disarmament and international peace and security. I would like to express my appreciation for the positive contributions that the delegation of Brazil is making in the Group of 21, the positions of which are currently being coordinated under the chairmanship of Brazil's Ambassador Celso Laser, and also for Brazil's contributions to the Conference's negotiations on the CTBT.

I wish to welcome the participation of the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom, His Excellency Mr. David Davis, in this meeting. We are looking forward to hearing the statement that he will be delivering in a few moments' time on the CTBT negotiations.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Ambassador Fisseha Yimer of Ethiopia, who is today participating for the first time in the meetings of the Conference on Disarmament, and to express the readiness of the delegation of Egypt to cooperate with him and with the other members of the Conference.

I have asked for the floor today in order to inform the Conference on Disarmament that, on 11 April 1996, the Egyptian capital, Cairo, hosted the signing ceremony of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty. On that day, 45 African States signed the Treaty and 4 nuclear-weapon States and Spain signed the relevant protocols. Such overwhelming success on the first day of the opening for signature of the said treaty is unprecedented and augurs well for the speedy entry into force of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty.

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

The Cairo Declaration, which was adopted on that occasion, states that the African State signatories of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty (the Pelindaba Treaty) decided that the first meeting of the Conference of States Parties to the Treaty would be held not later than one year after its entry into force. They also endorsed the establishment of the headquarters of the African Nuclear Energy Commission in South Africa. These developments took place following the reintegration of South Africa in the international community as a multiracial State, a principle that is clearly reflected in the new South African Constitution which was adopted at Cape Town on 8 May 1996. I seize this occasion to congratulate the delegation of South Africa.

The signing ceremony at Cairo represented the culmination of a process which started 32 years earlier when the First Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity held at Cairo in 1964 adopted the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa. Although the political conditions prevailing on the African continent at that time were not conducive to speedy progress towards the achievement of the objectives of the 1964 Cairo Declaration, the diligent endeavours that were subsequently made by African experts between 1991 and 1995, with effective assistance from the United Nations acting in collaboration with the Organization of African Unity, bore fruit and gave birth to the largest nuclear-weapon-free zone in terms of the number of States involved. The African nuclear-weapon-free zone constitutes an important structural component of the framework of article VII of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, together with other zones such as those of Antarctica, Latin America (Tlatelolco), the South Pacific (Rarotonga) and South-East Asia. The African Treaty represents a further step towards a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere. In fact, being a comprehensive African test-ban treaty, it is a step towards a worldwide ban which we earnestly hope will soon apply comprehensively under the terms of the comprehensive test-ban treaty, which is in the final stage of negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament session this year.

The protocols to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty provide the States parties thereto with comprehensive security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. They go far beyond the unilateral or multilateral declarations made by the nuclear-weapon States and Security Council resolutions 255 and 984. That step is an incentive to continue work towards ensuring that such assurances are extended universally to all non-nuclear-weapon States which have clearly and unambiguously renounced the nuclear option in a legally binding manner.

The African nuclear-weapon-free zone will also be a zone in which the dumping of nuclear waste will be prohibited. We are confident that the African continent will no longer be viewed as a cheap dumping ground for nuclear waste. The African environment must be preserved from this danger that is threatening the basic human rights, health and well-being of the African peoples, including their right to life and their right to health protection in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Therefore, the Treaty is a step forward towards safeguarding the concept of the right to development as a basic human right, since all disarmament measures help to create the conditions needed for the promotion of development.

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

The establishment of an African nuclear-weapon-free zone testifies to the developing countries' commitment to the cause of nuclear disarmament worldwide. The importance of this event should not be overlooked and the message that it conveys, at both the international and regional levels, cannot be ignored. Clearly, notwithstanding the diligent efforts made by the non-nuclear-weapon States, the primary responsibility for finally ridding the world of all nuclear weapons is not borne solely by those who do not possess such weapons. Nuclear-weapon States as well as threshold States must finally commit themselves fully and unambiguously to the total elimination of all nuclear weapons within a well-defined and legally binding time frame. To this end, as has been affirmed in various forums including the Conference on Disarmament, the Group of 21, the United Nations General Assembly and the Non-Aligned summits, the Conference on Disarmament must rapidly include a separate item on nuclear disarmament on its agenda and establish an ad hoc committee to deal with this item. The said ad hoc committee would begin its work immediately after the conclusion of the negotiations on the CTBT during the 1996 session of the Conference on Disarmament.

It is worth noting on this occasion that Egypt, as a State party to the NPT and as a signatory of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty, has submitted every year since 1974 a resolution to the General Assembly of the United Nations on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. In addition, in 1990 President Hosni Mubarak proposed the establishment of a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction in the same region. Both of these initiatives have on numerous occasions received broad support from the international community. However, to our deep regret, no positive steps have yet been taken by the international community to put either of them into effect, for very well-known reasons. Now following the signing of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty, we are hopeful that a more favourable international and regional environment will be created to achieve progress towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone and a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We therefore call upon Israel to cooperate with us in this regard and we urge it yet again to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to place all of its nuclear facilities under IAEA supervision in order to cooperate with a view to the establishment of the said zone. I refer in particular to the importance of holding discussions on this matter in the Multilateral Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group which was established at the Middle East peace conference held at Madrid.

Mr. President, in conclusion I wish to inform you that I have requested the secretariat to distribute the text of the Cairo Declaration, which was adopted on the occasion of the signing of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty at Cairo on 11 April 1996, as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament (document CD/1390 of 16 April 1996).

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Egypt for his statement. I now give the floor to the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, His Excellency Mr. David Davis.

Mr. DAVIS (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, may I start by thanking you and others for your kind words of welcome today?

This is a vital moment in the history of the Conference on Disarmament. Rarely if ever has the international community followed your deliberations more closely. You have an opportunity to contribute to the new post-cold-war order and to reinforce the international norm of global non-proliferation. In a word, you are in a position to write history. Your task is clear. You have a firm mandate to negotiate a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. The time-frame is also clear. At the Conference, almost exactly a year ago, at which 175 States agreed without a vote to extend indefinitely the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the parties to that Treaty committed themselves to work to complete a CTBT in 1996. The United Nations General Assembly last autumn reinforced that decision and looked to endorse the CTBT at its session this autumn. I readily understand that this is no easy task. At this important stage of your work, it is a source of disappointment to my Government that 36 countries are still waiting for admission to the Conference on Disarmament. While we value the participation of most of these as active observers, we would have liked to see them as members at the earliest opportunity. I have no easy solution to this difficult problem, but I would like to place on record again my Government's support for the widest possible expansion of your membership. We continue to believe that all those who have applied to date should be admitted at once.

Multilateral negotiations, despite their complexities, are firmly rooted in the concerns of the real world. Negotiations will only prosper if the international environment is favourable. The Chemical Weapons Convention, the negotiation of which stands as one of this Conference's greatest achievements to date, is an excellent example. It gives me the greatest pleasure to announce that the United Kingdom instrument of ratification was deposited in New York on 13 May. We urge others to complete ratification as soon as possible and look forward to the Convention's early entry into force.

In the case of efforts to ban nuclear testing, a good start was made as long ago as 1963 by the conclusion of the partial test-ban Treaty. Since then, the United Kingdom has taken part in attempts to conclude a comprehensive ban.

Earlier efforts failed because the security environment at the time did not allow for sufficient confidence between the States who were then concerned. But now, at the end of the cold war, the time for a CTBT has come. My country firmly supported the start of negotiations in 1994 and has participated actively from the beginning.

My Government's policy on nuclear testing is quite clear. British Ministers have stated on several occasions - and I am glad to be able to repeat to you today - that we are willing to sacrifice the possibility of testing. But self-denying ordinances are not enough. In the current climate, the international community rightly demands a universal, indefinite and effectively verifiable treaty that will ban all nuclear test explosions

(Mr. Davis, United Kingdom)

I would like to explain to you why Britain is such a firm supporter of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, given that - as is well known - we firmly believe that nuclear deterrence has made a major contribution to security in Europe over the past 50 years.

There is no doubt that a test ban will be a genuine sacrifice for us. It will limit the capability of all the nuclear-weapon States to develop new nuclear weapons and to modernize their existing stocks. But this is in our view a price worth paying.

We believe that a CTBT can make an important contribution to international stability. It will make nuclear proliferation more difficult. And it will help to create a security climate in which the proliferation of nuclear weapons will increasingly be seen as irresponsible and unacceptable.

The CTBT is one element of a broader process in which the United Kingdom, and our allies, have played a major part. We have responded to the end of the cold war by reducing the status of nuclear deterrence in our defence posture. Together with our allies, we have been able to make substantial reductions in our nuclear forces.

Our recent signature of the protocols to the South Pacific and African nuclear-free-zone treaties, as mentioned by Ambassador Zahran, creates further landmarks, which inter alia confirm that we see a permanent end to testing as a desirable and realistic goal.

It remains the case, however, that the continuing uncertainties which characterize our security mean that we cannot accept a commitment to a deadline for the elimination of nuclear weapons, nor do we believe that the Conference on Disarmament could usefully address these issues.

Those who insist on such moves as conditions for the completion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty know that the effect would be to sacrifice the treaty they claim to want. They should remember that they would have to answer to the international community if they were to frustrate one of its long-held objectives.

Indeed, it seems bizarre to us that there are some voices suggesting that the declared nuclear Powers should pay for the privilege of accepting constraints on our capabilities.

It is all the more bizarre when any objective observer would recognize that, if our goal is to promote international stability and to prevent war, we would focus our attention first not on nuclear weapons but on those conventional weapons which cause actual and great suffering every day. That is why we have consistently argued that the Conference on Disarmament should work on a balanced agenda covering both conventional armaments and weapons of mass destruction.

(Mr. Davis, United Kingdom)

Our willingness to make sacrifices is only rational in the context of an internationally endorsed framework for non-proliferation to the universality of which its parties are fully committed. It is no accident that we repeated out commitment to a CTBT in New York last May.

Having set out the fundamental principles underlying our approach, I should like now to turn in a little more detail to the kind of treaty we expect to see. In our view, the CTBT must have three fundamental qualities. It must be truly comprehensive. It must be effectively verifiable. And it must be universal.

First, it must be truly comprehensive. We have lent our strong and unequivocal support to the principle that the treaty should ban any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion, however small. This approach has set the standard for the negotiations. No other single decision has given them such a clear boost. I strongly urge those who have not yet done so to join with us in agreeing to a treaty on this basis.

The treaty must also be effectively verifiable. Verification, both by the international monitoring system and through a rigorous procedure for on-site inspection, is vital if the treaty is to act as a deterrent against testing.

We consistently support the highest standards for the verification of arms control and non-proliferation treaties. The CTBT must be no exception. It is therefore fitting that Dr. Peter Marshall, a member of the United Kingdom delegation, should be playing such a vital role as Friend of the Chair on the international monitoring system technologies.

But, however good the IMS will be, it is in our view essential that parties should be able to bring all relevant information to bear in the verification process. No artificial distinctions should be drawn, and no source of data be excluded.

Our third requirement is that the CTBT should be universal. We have argued strongly that the treaty should not enter into force without the adherence of those countries who could potentially test a nuclear device.

The way in which this requirement should be met is a matter for you in negotiation. It may be that the formula should take account of the fact that the vast majority of States are already prohibited by other treaty obligations from testing.

I should make absolutely clear that we do not hold this position so firmly because we have some absurd secret desire to see the treaty collapse so that we can test again. Having made clear that we have no plans to test again, we can have no interest in seeing the negotiations fail - just the opposite. We have the greatest possible interest in seeing these negotiations succeed. But it is vital that the international community should not miss the opportunity to make a real contribution to non-proliferation and global stability by the establishment of a universal treaty.

(Mr. Davis, United Kingdom)

My country firmly supported the 1994 mandate to negotiate a comprehensive test-ban treaty. In agreeing to the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty last year, we also agreed to work to conclude negotiations this year. That remains our objective today. We welcome the unstinting effort of Ambassador Ramaker to guide the Ad Hoc Committee to a consensus.

But our sights do not stop there at the CTBT. We equally firmly support an early start to negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in accordance with your mandate agreed last year. We share the views expressed not only in this chamber, but also by consensus at the NPT Review and Extension Conference and at the United Nations General Assembly, that such a treaty would contribute to the objectives of non-proliferation and global security.

We hope that progress will be unblocked rapidly and that negotiations will be able to commence soon after the completion of the CTBT.

But first things first. For the first time, a truly comprehensive, universal and effectively verifiable test-ban treaty is clearly in sight. As I said at the beginning, you are in the business of making history. On behalf of the British Government I wish you every success in the coming weeks.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Croatia, Ambassador Madey.

Mr. MADEY (Croatia): Today I feel honoured to address the Conference on Disarmament at the time when it enters the critical phase of important negotiations. The international community expects that they will be concluded as scheduled and with a positive outcome. The Croatian delegation wishes you, Mr. President, as well as other distinguished delegates, success in discharging your challenging responsibilities.

The importance of today's meeting is even greater, as I am privileged to deliver the first ever statement on behalf of the Republic of Croatia before the Conference on Disarmament. Besides that symbolic meaning, this fact demonstrates my country's sincere desire to make its modest contribution to the process of disarmament and to the promotion of peace and security in the world. That contribution is possible particularly now, as Croatia is an independent and sovereign State, whose remaining occupied territory will soon be peacefully brought under its authority. The strength of our commitment to the cause of disarmament is reinforced by our own grave experience of the importance of a credible force and armaments to fight against aggression and, on the other hand, the human tragedy, suffering and destruction that armaments and the imposed war have caused to our country and its population. Let us not forget nearly 11,000 killed, 38,000 wounded, 2,800 still missing, and war damage estimated at nearly 27 billion United States dollars.

After gaining independence, one of the first steps of my Government was to notify its accession to all major disarmament and arms control treaties.

(Mr. Madey, Croatia)

It has been done on the ground of succession to the predecessor State, the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in order to avoid and dismiss any kind of legal vacuum and political dubiety, and desirous to act as a responsible member of the international community. By acting in this way, Croatia at that early stage clearly showed her determination to ensure transparency in this sensitive area of international relations. Given her difficult position at that time, such a determination required even more courage. Despite all the calamities we were exposed to, we have none the less employed our best efforts in participating actively in the work of numerous preparatory commissions and expert groups dealing with multilateral disarmament and arms control issues. In that context allow me to recall the ratification of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty by the Croatian Parliament and our active contribution to the results of the NPT Review Conference.

On 23 May 1995 Croatia deposited the instruments of ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention, thus becoming the 28th State to do so. As we have expressed our strong commitment to this unprecedented document and its principles, we would encourage the widest possible adherence to the CWC, particularly by the countries neighbouring Croatia. Those States, which have not yet done so, should accede bearing in mind that equality and mutuality in commitments is the cornerstone of confidence-building.

It should, however, be stressed that the concept of a chemical weapons ban means little, if anything, without the ratification of two main possessors. Their definite international legal acceptance of the Convention and their readiness to undergo its intensive verification mechanisms is of vital importance for the CWC's successful taking-off. Otherwise, we are running a risk of creating just another non-proliferation system.

Within the limits of its possibilities Croatia has also participated in the work of the CCW Review Conference, conscious of the disastrous effects and human suffering that anti-personnel land-mines have been creating worldwide in all regional and local conflicts. Regretfully, in our country and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, millions of those weapons are still indiscriminately scattered, thus still inflicting casualties among civilians and military personnel, now in times of peace. For these concerns and because of its desire to promote the cause of peace, Croatia declared on 19 April 1996 a total moratorium on the use, production, stockpiling, import and export of anti-personnel land-mines, booby-traps and remotely delivered anti-personnel mines.

Croatia also attaches great hopes in regard to another important event on the gradual, but steady path towards elimination of weapons of mass destruction in the Forth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological (Bacteriological) Weapons Convention, scheduled for the fall of this year, which offers an opportunity for the creation of an effective and comprehensive verification regime for the Convention - an element which has been lacking and the absence of which has been its main shortcoming.

In the last two years we have witnessed tremendous efforts by the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate the comprehensive test-ban treaty.

(Mr. Madev, Croatia)

This comprehensive and effectively verifiable legal document should contribute to nuclear disarmament and the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects. Its conclusion by the end of June is a task of the highest priority and it must be negotiated in a manner so as to enable that the signing of the document takes place at the outset of the fifty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly. Once this is done, it will certainly not represent the final word on the issue of nuclear disarmament which remains an important goal to be achieved.

At this crucial stage of negotiations Croatia also desires to note the risk to which effective verification, one of the CTBT's key elements, is exposed in case the concept of "peaceful nuclear explosion" is adopted. In our view it would considerably weaken the credibility of the treaty and would raise a great number of ambiguities. Furthermore, at this stage, such a proposal serves nothing else, but to complicate and prolong the negotiations. Hence, we support the true zero option - once and for ever.

Concerning the seat of the future CTBT organization, Croatia too supports the candidature of Vienna, convinced that the proven efficiency of the institutions already hosted by this city provides a solid guarantee for the effective and successful work of the organization. There are also additional reasons, which, for the sake of practicality and cost-efficiency, advocate the candidature of Vienna. Having the CTBTO collocated with IAEA and other organizations in the Vienna International Centre would certainly considerably facilitate the functioning of the Conference and the Executive Council. For the most part, the organization's technical secretariat could operate from within IAEA and the international monitoring system could be organized in such ways so as to make full use and take advantage of the existing IAEA facilities. Such an approach would help to avoid a great deal of unnecessary additional costs for the member States.

In this brief expose allow me to reiterate that Croatia, its people and the Government are fully dedicated to the establishment of peace in our immediate region, which during the last five years has experienced aggression with unprecedented brutality and destruction. Those aggressive and expansionist nationalistic goals of establishing the so-called "greater Serbia" in the territory of the former Yugoslavia were not fortunately achieved due to the resistance of the Croatian people and its army, who, in 1991, were inferior in armaments, but superior in morale and a high goal to achieve Croatian independence. Now when that dream is a reality, Croatia wishes to enjoy the fruits of peace and development. As an integral part of Europe and its civilization, we will strive to promote links which bring our interests together. The recent decision to recommend the admission of Croatia into the Council of Europe, being our long-awaited objective, represents a solid investment in future democracy and stability in this part of Europe. Therefore, our expectation is that the Committee of Ministers will confirm our membership in the Council. Continuing along this path towards full integration into European economic and North Atlantic security structures, to begin with the Partnership for Peace, Croatia is prepared not only to draw the benefits, but to assume all responsibilities as well.

(Mr. Madey, Croatia)

As peace and security are our vital interests, the implementation of the General Framework Agreement negotiated at Dayton and signed in Paris carries our commitment and attachment, which was frequently reaffirmed and proven in situations when difficulties were arising. In that context, the subregional arms control negotiations being held now in Vienna in accordance with article IV of annex 1-B of the said Agreement are entering into their critical and hopefully final stage. In a region which is seriously struck by mistrust and suspicion, reduction of arms, together with effective verification mechanisms, is a must for everybody striving to achieve the required stability. As one of the participants in that process, we expect the others to make their full contribution and in good faith. Thus, together with the implementation of the Basic Agreement on Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium, where the crucial and most important phase of the reintegration process, demilitarization, is almost to take place, we can see the key elements of the normalization being shaped, only to be fully and irrevocably confirmed by mutual recognition within their international borders between the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

And, finally, a word on the question of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament, a highly controversial issue, for members and pretenders alike. Although Croatia's candidature for membership rests only few years, we share the frustration with those countries now in the "Group of 13", those like the Slovak Republic still legitimately arguing for its place, and others already selected on the so-called "O'Sullivan list", whose contribution to the extended Conference on Disarmament would correct obvious imbalances now present. The Conference, therefore, now faces two major challenges which will determine its future, as important as retaining the negotiating character of this unique United Nations forum. One is the CTBT, the other is expansion of the membership, where a place should be found for countries like Croatia and the rest of the Group of 13.

In that group, three countries are legitimate and equal successors of the former Yugoslavia, which demonstrates their keen and active interest in disarmament issues. As the seat of the former Yugoslavia in the Conference on Disarmament is empty, let me reiterate on this occasion our stand, confirmed by the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations and by the Badinter Commission, to the effect that no State from the dissolved SFRY can claim sole and automatic rights of membership of the former Yugoslavia in United Nations organs, and in particular the provisions of resolution 47/1 of 22 September 1992 of the United Nations General Assembly, which requests the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) to apply for membership. We expect the Conference on Disarmament member States to fully respect and adhere to this position.

With these words I would like to repeat our good wishes for the successful work and outcome of this session of the Conference on Disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Croatia for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Berdennikov.

Mr. BERDENNIKOV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): It gives me pleasure to welcome the representative of the friendly country of Nigeria to the responsible post of President of the Conference on Disarmament. I sincerely wish you success in guiding the work of our forum. I would also like to welcome the new Ambassador of Ethiopia among us and to thank the Minister of External Relations of Brazil and the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom for their important statements and their attention to the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

Today I have taken the floor in order to draw the attention of the participants in the Conference to official documents which are of direct relevance to the negotiations here in the CD on the comprehensive nuclear test ban, and also to explain the stance of the Russian delegation on an important aspect of these negotiations.

First of all, on behalf of the delegations of France and Russia, I should like to present document CD/1293, dated 22 April 1996, which has been distributed in the Conference on Disarmament at the request of these two delegations as representatives of the countries which co-chaired the Moscow summit. It contains a joint statement on the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty (CTBT) adopted in Moscow on 20 April 1996 by the participants in the Moscow summit on nuclear safety issues. The statement reads:

"We affirmed our commitment to conclude and sign a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty (CTBT) by September 1996. We agreed that a CTBT will be a concrete step toward the achievement of one of the highest priority objectives of the international community in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, and the fulfilment of the obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We also agreed that the CTBT must prohibit any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion. We affirmed that this would constitute a truly comprehensive nuclear test ban.

"In this connection, we recalled the importance of the decision on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted on 11 May 1995."

I would like to hope that this statement will promote the achievement of the tasks facing the CTBT negotiations.

Continuing this statement now on behalf of the Russian delegation alone, I would like to note that the outcome of the Moscow G-8 summit on nuclear safety issues, as well as the results of the State visit to China by the President of the Russian Federation, B.N. Yeltsin, create favourable conditions for the successful completion of the CTBT negotiations in the very near future. Today, resuming one of the key issues of the negotiations, namely the scope of the ban in the future treaty, I would like to remind you that the Russian delegation has always argued that this treaty should contain no threshold restrictions whatsoever. We note with satisfaction that this approach is now shared by other participants in the negotiations. In this connection I would like to confirm that the Russian delegation supports the

(Mr. Berdennikov, Russian Federation)

proposal on the language of the treaty article concerning its scope which is contained in working paper No. 222 of the Conference on Disarmament's Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban of 9 March 1995. It is our understanding that this proposal does not contradict the provisions of the 1963 Moscow partial test-ban Treaty and provides for an extension of the prohibition contained in that treaty to the underground environment. Thus, if this proposal is accepted, any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion in any environment will be banned forever without any "thresholds". We call upon all other delegations which have not yet done so to lend their support to the language of the article on scope contained in document CD/NTB/WP.222 of 9 March 1995.

At the same time, I am instructed to state that a decrease in the reliability and the safety of any of the key types of Russian nuclear weapons could be assessed by us as a threat to our country's supreme national interests, and also that when the CTBT enters into force, and pending the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, which remains our ultimate goal, Russia will be obliged to conduct nuclear stockpile stewardship activities, including test site activities, which do not run counter to the ban to be imposed by the future treaty.

I would also like to note that the Russian delegation has requested the secretariat of the Conference to distribute as an official document of the CD a statement made in Moscow on 19 April 1996 by the Press Secretary of the President of the Russian Federation concerning the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. The statement reads as follows:

> "The Russian Federation is a consistent advocate of a comprehensive nuclear test ban. In October of this year it will be five years since Russia introduced a moratorium on nuclear testing.
>
> "I am convinced that the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty (CTBT), the drafting of which is now entering a decisive phase, will be a powerful factor preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their qualitative improvement.
>
> "Guided by the desire to facilitate the prompt elaboration of the treaty in the Conference on Disarmament, I wish to declare that Russia supports the commitment to ban all nuclear weapon test explosions and all other nuclear explosions in any environment.
>
> "Our approach is based on the fact that Russia, like the other nuclear Powers, will bear special responsibility for ensuring the safety of its nuclear arsenal pending the general and complete elimination of nuclear weapons, which remains our ultimate goal.
>
> "In this connection, when the CTBT enters into force Russia will be obliged to conduct nuclear stockpile stewardship activities which do not run counter to the ban to be imposed by the future treaty. To this end, the following measures will be implemented:

(Mr. Berdennikov, Russian Federation)

"1. Adoption and implementation of a federal programme of activities to ensure the safety and reliability of the Russian nuclear arsenal without conducting nuclear explosions.

"2. Support for existing Russian nuclear centres and implementation of programmes in the field of theoretical and investigatory nuclear technology projects, which will ensure maintenance of the scientific and technological potential and the high level of skills of scientists, designers and employees in these nuclear centres.

"3. Maintenance of the basic capability for the possible renewal of nuclear testing activities in the event that the situation develops in such a way that the Russian Federation ceases to be bound by the restrictions contained in the treaty.

"4. Continuation of activities aimed at improving our capabilities for monitoring the ban on nuclear testing.

"5. Further improvement of information-gathering and analytical resources, including intelligence resources, to ensure the collection of reliable and timely information on nuclear arsenals, possible covert nuclear armament projects or other activities conducted by other countries that are of significance for nuclear weapons purposes.

"At the same time I wish to declare that Russia, if its supreme interests are threatened, will make use of its right to withdraw from the treaty in order to conduct all necessary tests which may be called for if there is no other possible means of confirming a high level of confidence in the safety or reliability of any of the key types of Russian nuclear weapons.

"While expressing our support for the decision on this matter taken by the 1995 Conference on the Review and Extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, we call upon all participants in the negotiations on the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty to do their utmost to complete the negotiations no later than September 1996."

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka, Ambassador Goonetilleke.

Mr. GOONETILLEKE (Sri Lanka): Mr. President, please allow me to extend to you warm congratulations and the best wishes of my delegation upon your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Sri Lanka is fully confident that with your diplomatic skills and vast experience, you will be able to discharge the responsibilities of the high office of the presidency.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the important statements made by His Excellency Mr. Luiz Felipe Lampreia, Minister of External Relations of the Federal Republic of Brazil, and His Excellency Mr. David Davis, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the

United Kingdom, during this plenary meeting. May I also warmly welcome Ambassador Yimer of Ethiopia to the Conference on Disarmament.

You would recall that in my statement on the 12 of February last I assured the Conference of my Government's commitment to the early conclusion of the CTBT negotiations in keeping with the expectation of the international community.

It is heartening to note that following the address by the United Nations General Assembly of September 1993, the Conference has remained seized of the CTBT negotiations ever since the 1993 session began on 25 January. In between that and now, the CD has also worked inter-sessionally devoted its time entirely to the CTBT issue. The progress achieved in the Conference so far on most issues is satisfactory. However, we have to acknowledge the fact that much more remains to be done and the time available to the Conference is running out fast.

If we are to reach our desired goal in time, that is by 30 June, the Conference needs to move at a much faster pace than it was able to during the first part of the 1994 session.

In determining either to freeze [illegible] Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on NTB for holding out a working paper [illegible] of [illegible] the working paper and the [illegible] leading texts, namely the Indian text and Australia's model treaty, have [illegible] the Chairman [illegible] to the [illegible] negotiations.

Meanwhile, the two working groups, under the able stewardship of Ambassador Berlemann and Ambassador Ja'afari have made their contribution to achieving progress respectively on treaty verification and legal and institutional issues to the extent possible.

In the preface to the working paper, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on NTB had rightly identified the areas of the treaty and the protocol on which complete convergence of views remained to be achieved. They are its scope, preamble, composition of the executive council, technical secretariat, international data centre, on-site inspection regime and entry into force. There are yet other general areas which have not been fully covered to date.

These issues, which are both political and technical in character, are fundamental to the treaty. Resolution of these issues, need I say, is indispensable to early finalization of the draft treaty. Thus, we are at a critical juncture. Can we continue to proceed at the present pace and under the same arrangements we had up to now and reasonably expect to complete our work before the deadline? It is the view of my delegation that the pace has to be significantly accelerated and appropriate arrangements have to be made by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on NTB in order to clear the remaining major obstacles.

It is in this context that I thought I might express myself once again and stress that the CD as a whole must be ready to continue the CTBT

(Mr. Goonetilleke, Sri Lanka)

negotiations with a deeper sense of urgency, committing itself to work longer hours with or without conference services support. As for my delegation, it would be doing everything possible within its means, while reposing its confidence in, and extending cooperation to, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on NTB, to enable the ongoing negotiations to reach their logical conclusion by the end of June.

My delegation is quite confident that with a greater commitment and a faster pace, the Ad Hoc Committee, under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Ramaker, will be able to complete its negotiations in time to produce the draft CTBT and make it ready for adoption by the General Assembly as envisaged in United Nations General Assembly resolution 50/65.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Sri Lanka for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? If not, I should now like to take up for decision the request received from Angola to participate in our work as a non-member. In accordance with past practice, copies of this request were placed in delegations' pigeon-holes on 7 May. It is now before you under cover of document CD/WP.474. May I assume that the Conference decides to accept this request without having to go to an informal plenary meeting, on the understanding that this would not constitute a precedent for any such future requests?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: The secretariat has circulated, at my request, a tentative timetable of meetings for next week. This timetable was prepared in consultation with the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban and is, as usual, merely indicative and subject to change if necessary. May I assume that this timetable is acceptable?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: That concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 23 May 1996 at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.